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Dutch planning policy: The resurgence of TOD

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the transfer of knowledge and information in planning processes, particularly those related to Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in the metropolitan region of Amsterdam. The authors conclude that knowledge transfers are often highly dependent on the actions of individuals, and that the process of knowledge exchange is frequently uncoordinated and fragmented. Planning ideas from elsewhere often provide inspiration for policy makers but these do not often lead to changes in the formulation of policy or practice.

Introduction

Policy concepts commonly experience waves of discovery, rejection or neglect, and rediscovery, acceptance or resurgence. This article examines the rediscovery and resurgence of the concept of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in the Netherlands. While TOD is often assumed to be a recent policy import from North American cities (i.e. an object of policy transfer), it is arguably based on much older ideas of rail-based property development (i.e. streetcar suburbs) that date back more than a century (see for example Warner, 1962; Kellet, 1969). Some authors have argued that the concept of TOD has been rediscovered in Europe due to a combination of factors including technological innovations in transit and logistics, privatization reforms in rail transit, the quest for sustainable development patterns, and the shifting spatial dynamics of contemporary society (Bertolini et al., 2012).

Common TOD traits include compactness, pedestrian and cycle-friendly environs, public and civic spaces near stations, and stations as community hubs (Transit Cooperative Research Program, 2002). In parts of Europe and Asia, the TOD approach reaches further than single locations by employing a network approach, which aims at realigning entire urban regions around rail transport and away from the car. While these are the basic TOD tenets, the model has been revised to fit a variety of contexts (including low-density cities and regions), as accounts of TOD practices from North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia illustrate (see for example Curtis et al., 2009; Quinn, 2008; Curtis, 2008; Knowles, 2012; Ratner and Goetz, 2013).

The main purpose of this article is to examine processes of policy transfer related to TOD planning in the metropolitan region of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. While literature abounds on Dutch planning policy in general, only a handful of studies exist on policy transfer to and from the Netherlands (e.g. de Jong and Geerlings, 2005; van de Velde, 2011; Vinke-De Kruijf et al., 2012), and none of these focus on urban or transportation planning. Although this article touches on TOD implementation issues, this matter is considered in more detail in a companion paper (Pojani and Stead, forthcoming).

The paper is divided into five main parts. The first part contains a summary and critique of policy transfer research and its relation to urban planning and transportation issues. Secondly, the theoretical framework, used to chart the transfer of TOD policies, concepts, and tools later in this paper, and the research approach are set out. In the third part, a brief overview of the Dutch planning context is provided. Fourthly, the transfer of TOD policies, concepts, and tools are discussed, drawing on empirical evidence from semi-structured interviews with policy makers from various government levels and knowledge exchange platforms, as well as selected independent experts. The conclusions are contained in the fifth part of the paper.

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Policy transfer: theory and practice

Rationale for engaging in policy transfer

Several observers have noted an upsurge in knowledge and policy transfer. A number of factors have been put forward to explain this phenomenon (see for example Evans, 2009a; Healey, 2010). These factors range from macro (global and transnational) via meso (state) through to micro (local, organizational, and network) in scale.

At the macro level, patterns of increased internationalization have influenced the development of policies and strategies. The internet has made information about policy initiatives throughout the world more accessible and has enabled policy entrepreneurs, knowledge institutions, and governments to advocate or promote certain practices and expertise. Planning ideas and practices are not just diffusing from the "west to the rest" or from the "developed" to the "developing" world, or from the "north" to the "south" but rather in every direction (see for example Healey and Upton, 2010).

At the meso level, changes in government and governance, including economic prudence or austerity, reduction of state intervention, reform of the welfare state, decentralization, public participation, and internationalization (as opposed to isolationism), have provided more demand for the exchange of knowledge and information on policy-making. Policy networks have emerged, many of which aim to promote and transfer specific policy agendas or solutions.

At the micro level, public organizations, in both developed and developing countries, do not always possess the necessary expertise to tackle all the complex problems they confront and increasingly look elsewhere for answers to their problems. In these cases, policy transfer is seen as a way of providing answers to policy problems.

Policy transfer literature: approaches and shortcomings

Various terms, which mirror differences in the modes of policy transfer, are used to denote these phenomena, including bandwagoning, convergence, diffusion, emulation, policy learning, social learning, and lesson-drawing (Stead et al., 2008). It should be noted that the concept of policy transfer includes more than the transfer of policies alone; it also covers the transfer of a range of other policy-related features such as principles, goals, instruments, or programs.

Typically, policy transfer analyses focus on one or more of three areas of study: (1) description of how policy transfer is made, (2) explanation of why policy transfer occurs, and (3) prescription of how policy transfer should be made (Evans, 2009a). Through a combination of theoretical and empirical inquiry, policy transfer analysis has advanced the understanding of how policy ideas and practices move from place to place, or from organization to organization. However, the policy transfer literature has sometimes been criticized for a lack of relevance for practice (Evans, 2009b). This paper not only aims to examine practice but also attempts to identify the relevance of the observations for practice.

Difficulties of policy transfer and the exchange of best practices

The content of policy transfers related to governance and urban and transport planning is often informed by notions of "best practice". Current efforts to identify, disseminate, and promote flagship examples are guided by the belief that best practice catalogs will contribute to intra- and cross-national learning, lead to improvements in policy and practice, and help avoid the mistakes of others (Stead, 2012). However, a number of studies have observed distortions and irrational or unpredicted outcomes both in the way information is "sent" and in the way it is "received", casting doubts on the value of exchanging 'best practices' (Marsden and Stead, 2011; Wolman et al., 1994).

From the information senders' perspective, lenders from government agencies have been known to make an effort at highlighting their stronger urban programs, activities, and policies, in order to enhance their own reputation (Wolman and Page, 2002). Other groups that promote best practice and policy transfer, such as lobbies, advocacy groups, and think tanks, are often deeply ideological and/or tend to endorse specific solutions that further their own cause (Evans, 2009a). Reformers tend promote universalistic "best practice" which is assumed to work equally well everywhere but is not the case in practice (Rose, 2001).

The reputations of certain so-called best practices might snowball simply because observers become self-referential (Marsden and Stead, 2011). Particular experiences are then cast as templates or icons, embodying the policy being promoted (Cochrane, 2012). In fact, a US-based study conducted in the early 1990s found that many purported urban success stories (as perceived by highly informed observers) were mythical and that "successfully revitalized" cities had performed no better than others on indicators such as unemployment, poverty, and income. Also, the appeal and ultimate influence of ideas might have more to do with their emotional quality, which skilled policy entrepreneurs are able to alter through rhetoric, than with the rational deliberation of policy makers (Cox and Béland, 2013).

From the information recipients' perspective, Stead (2012, 2013) concluded that the scope of policy transfer in spatial planning within Europe is limited due to substantial differences in the economic, political, and social situation of member states. In transport, Marsden and Stead (2011) found that the motivation for learning from others is strongly bounded to funding opportunities and that policy transfer is sometimes introduced for political reasons, to legitimate conclusions already reached by an organization. Studying policy transfer among local governments, Wolman and Page (2002) reported a strong bias toward neighboring local or regional experts, who are perceived both as peers (personally known and trusted individuals) or respected competitors with similar circumstances. Also they found that borrowers tend to focus their attention on physical development, which is the most visible. Focusing on best practice for urban sustainability, Bulkeley (2006) argued that practitioners use best practice examples primarily to draw inspiration and to frame policy discourses rather than as a source of technical expertise.

Methodology

This study of TOD policy transfer is based on information from semi-structured interviews conducted with more than 40 policy officers from the municipal, regional and provincial levels of government, the national Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, the Dutch Railways, the Environmental Assessment Agency, several knowledge exchange platforms, and selected independent experts. Interviewees were selected based on the reputational method.[1] A list of the interviewees and the respective agencies is presented in Table 1. The interviewees have all been closely involved in the development or implementation of TOD-related policy. TOD specialists in the Netherlands constitute a relatively small community, so the identification and selection of interviewees was relatively

[1] The reputational method involved the identification of a first cohort of interviewees with knowledge and professional experience in TOD. They were then interviewed and asked to recommend additional interviewees who were subsequently interviewed and asked for recommendations for more interviewees. The process ended when no new names were added to the list.

Table 1
Interviewee list.

Name of agency/company	Function of agency/company	No. of interviewees
Public sector		
City of Amsterdam	Responsible for roads, public transport, housing, spatial planning, environment, social affairs, economic development, education and health care within its borders.	Interviewees 1–8
City of Almere	Part of the Amsterdam metropolitan region, same functions as above.	Interviewee 9
City-Region (*Stadsregio*) of Amsterdam	Consists of Amsterdam and the surrounding municipalities that form part of the same daily urban system, responsible especially for traffic and transport.	Interviewees 10–11
Province of North Holland	Coordinates planning, transport, culture, social affairs, and has legal control over the municipalities.	Interviewees 12–14
Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment	Deals with strategic projects (main ports, major stations, and national rail infrastructure).	Interviewees 15–19
Environmental Assessment Agency (*Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, PBL*)	National institute for strategic policy analysis in environment, nature and spatial planning.	Interviewees 20–21
OV Bureau Randstad	Cooperative arrangement between national and regional public transport authorities in the Randstad.	Interviewee 22
StedenbaanPlus	Intergovernmental, non-mandatory regional TOD program (high frequency train service in combination with upgrading of rail station areas) in the southern part of the Randstad.	Interviewees 23–24[a]
Other Dutch local/regional governments	The Hague's City-Region (*StadsgewestHaaglanden*), Province of Gelderland, City of Nijmegen, and City of Eindhoven	Interviewees 25–29[b]
Private sector		
Dutch railways (*Nederlandse Spoorwegen, NS*)	Concessionary company; oversees rail operations and owns rail station buildings.	Interviewees 30–32[c]
Vereniging Deltametropool	Deltametropolis Association - research, lobbying, and knowledge exchange platform	Interviewee 33
Platform 31	Urban and regional knowledge center	Interviewee 34
Traffic and Transport Knowledge Resource Center (*Kennisplatform Verkeer en Vervoer, KpVV*)	Research center	Interviewee 35
Independent experts	Self-employed or employed in consultancy firms	Interviewees 36–42

[a] Email communication with Interviewee 24.
[b] Email communication with Interviewee 26.
[c] Interview 30 was conducted by a colleague in connection with a different project.

straight-forward. While it could be argued that these individuals, especially the public sector employees, might have biases or vested interests to present TOD policies and processes in a positive light, the interviewees often expressed candid and critical views. This might be explained by the fact that Dutch planners are generally shielded from direct political interference in their profession (Faludi, 2005) or by a cultural penchant for forthrightness. Direct quotes are used in the text to illustrate and clarify the main points that they made in the interviews. In discussing the responses of interviewees, names and specific functions have been withheld to preserve anonymity.

Theoretical framework

In this paper, the interview material is analyzed and presented according to a multi-level framework adopted from Evans (2009a,b,c) and Dolowitz and Marsh (2000). The latter is generally regarded as a key text on policy transfer and still very relevant for policy transfer analysis (Benson and Jordan, 2011). Moreover, Dolowitz and Marsh's framework has been used to study policy transfer in disparate policy fields in a multiplicity of geographic contexts. Our theoretical framework, illustrated in Table 2, considers the following facets of policy transfer:

1 *Agents of policy transfer* These agents must be distinguished, along with the policy belief systems they advocate, their motivations and expected benefits, the role they play in transfer, their attitudes and cultural values, and the resources they bring to the process. In the literature, at least eight main categories of agents of transfer can be identified, including: politicians (elected officials), bureaucrats (civil servants), pressure (advocacy) groups, policy entrepreneurs (think tanks, consultants), knowledge institutions, academics (experts), international organizations, and supra-national institutions.
2 *Object of transfer* What is transferred or sought to be transferred (i.e. policies, goals, instruments, or programs).
3 *Motivations for policy transfer* A key question is: "why transfer?" The answer typically falls within a continuum that varies from voluntary, perfectly rational transfer, to coercive transfer imposed by pressure groups, political parties, funding bodies, and policy entrepreneurs or experts. Voluntary transfer tends to occur in developed countries while coercive transfer is common in developing countries. The middle ground involves mixed forms of transfer where governments or organizations adopt certain policies in order to secure grants, loans, or other inward investments, or as a result of politico-economic crisis or image concerns.
4 *Processes of policy learning and transfer* Process issues include two sets of questions: (i) from where is transfer occurring (i.e. within a nation or cross-national); and (ii) to what degree has transfer occurred (i.e. copying, emulation, hybridization, or inspiration). Copying, where a public organization adopts a policy, program, or institution without modification, is rare. Emulation means benchmarking a home policy, program, or institution against a policy, program, or institution elsewhere, which is accepted as the best standard. Hybridization or mixture, where a governmental organization combines elements of programs found in several settings to develop a policy that is culturally sensitive to local needs, is the most common form of policy learning and transfer. Inspiration means that an idea from another setting inspires fresh thinking about a policy problem and helps facilitate policy change.
5 *Obstacles to policy learning and transfer* Three types of obstacles to policy transfer can be identified: (i) "cognitive" obstacles in the pre-decision phase (i.e. insufficient search for new ideas, low

Table 2
Theoretical framework.

1. Agents	2. Objects	3. Motivations	4. Processes	5. Obstacles	6. Outputs
Politicians	Policies	Voluntary	Direction	Cognitive	Soft
Bureaucrats	Goals	(prefect rationality)	Intra-national	insufficient search	Ideas
Pressure groups	Instruments	Mixture	Cross-National	Low cultural/ideological	Concepts
Policy entrepreneurs	Programs	(Bounded rationality)	(Non-transfer)	receptivity	Attitudes
Knowledge institutions		Grant/loan conditions	Degree of	Policy complexity	(Negative lessons)
Academics		Politico-economic	Copying	Physical distance	Hard
International organizations		conditions	Emulation	Language	Programs
Supra-national institutions		Image	Hybridization	Environmental	Implementation
		Coercion	Inspiration	Failure to mobilize elites	Failure
(Policy belief systems)		Pressure groups		No cohesive transfer networks	Uninformed transfer
(Motivations)		Political parties		Structural constraints	Incomplete transfer
(Expected benefits)		Funding bodies		Technical constraints	Inappropriate
(Role)		Policy entrepreneurs		Public opinion	transfer
(Attitudes/cultural values)		Experts		Elites	
(Resources)				Media	
				Constituency groups	

cultural and ideological receptivity of existing actors and organizations, complexity of the policies to be transferred, physical distance, and language barriers); (ii) "structural" obstacles during the process of transfer (i.e. failure to effectively mobilize the elites, lack of cohesive policy transfer networks, and technical implementation constraints, including limited financial and human resources); and (iii) public opinion, affected by the opinion of elites, media reports, and the attitudes and resources of constituency groups.

6 *Outputs of policy transfer* Policy transfers can be either negative or positive and (a) soft (i.e. changes in ideas, concepts, and attitudes);or (b) hard (i.e. changes in programs and implementation). An assumption is that policies which have been successful in one place will be successful in another. However, policy transfer might also lead to failure, due to: (i) uninformed transfer, if policies are transferred with insufficient information on how they work; (ii) incomplete transfer, if crucial aspects of policy are not transferred, and; (iii) inappropriate transfer, if the borrowers and lenders are divided by large differences in their economic, social, political, and ideological contexts.

Dutch planning context

The Dutch tradition of territorial management and transport policy have been highly praised by various commentators for some time (see for example Nathan and Marshall, 2006), although its position and standing is undoubtedly changing due to various reforms that have taken place in recent years (see Alpkokin, 2012), which have had impacts on the scope and operation of planning.

The Dutch government structure is a three-tiered (national, provincial, local) unitary state. Co-government among the three levels is an underlying principle. Policy-making generally involves intensive consultation and consensus-building, which can be a lengthy process (Nadin and Stead, 2008). The Dutch planning system is one of the most elaborate and mature examples of a comprehensive, integrated approach to territorial management (Commission of the European Communities, 1997). The implicit "master frame" of Dutch spatial planning consists of five basic principles: concentration of urbanization, spatial cohesion, spatial diversity, hierarchy, and spatial justice (Hajer and Zonneveld, 2000). Planning powers were recently decentralized to the provinces and municipalities (in 2008). However, since the national government is the chief source of funding for planning at all levels, it still wields great influence (Nadin and Stead, 2008).

Pressures from the private sector have relatively little effect on the decisions of where to develop (compared to many other countries) because municipalities act as land owners: they assemble parcels of land which they purchase from private parties and later resell or rent them to private developers. In the past, these powers have generated an important source of revenue for Dutch local authorities. With the recent economic crisis, some authorities have substantial land assets worth less than the purchase price and with no buyer in sight.

In terms of planning culture, the Netherlands has been described as a country with a "soft spot for planning" (Faludi, 2005, p. 285). This is the product of environmental conditions (e.g. flood risk), past economic hardships (i.e. famines during and after WWII), the relatively small size of the country (land scarcity), the Calvinist tradition of community orientation and cultural submission to governing authorities, and, in the postwar period, the presence of a strong and prosperous welfare state. Interest groups, limited in number, are incorporated into the state system and stakeholders are consulted at an early stage of planning procedures. Dutch planners are shielded from direct political interference (Faludi, 2005).

In the last decade, the Dutch planning system has been undergoing important reforms, due to a variety of factors. These include: a growing plurality of planning issues; an ideological reorientation toward neoliberalism and decentralization; and societal changes, including globalization, slow population growth, industrial decline, democratization, and social protest. The role of Dutch planners has transitioned toward a more facilitating position in which change is supported rather than initiated (Gerrits et al., 2012).

Agents of transfer: the TOD lobby

Current interest in TOD is unprecedented in the Netherlands. A small but active lobby, with participation from government, the private sector, non-profits, and academia (the "TOD believers network"), has formed to promote the TOD concept. Network members have gained substantial expertise on issues related to TOD. Meeting frequently, they keep each other updated on policies and practices related to development near transport nodes or along transport corridors. However, a number of interviewees lamented the fact that the lobby is a reclusive, tight circle, which has not opened up to a larger audience. Its members have been ineffective in reaching out to small outlying cities in need of TOD knowledge and in persuading the public at large on the benefits of TOD (Interviewees 8, 23 and 42).

The participants in the TOD process in the Amsterdam metropolitan region include the City and City-Region of Amsterdam, the Province of North Holland, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, Dutch Railways, and various exchange platforms and networks. A description of their viewpoints and values follows (see also Table 1).

- *City of Amsterdam.* The Amsterdam planning department has long followed the principle of steering new development towards public transport lines and stations (Interviewees 1 and 18). The City's progressive council and population support this approach. In fact, the most sought after office locations in Amsterdam are on the rail and metro lines. Most employment and education centers in the city can be easily reached by public transport (Interviewee 22). Understandably, staff planners are proud of their city and their achievements, as this comment illustrates: "*Amsterdam is an exception in the country. Here, car domination never took over. We have a cohesive vision. See all these bike routes: this department planned them (Interviewee 2).*" The City-Region works in close collaboration with the City and their plans are aligned (Interviewees 10 and 11).
- *Province of North Holland.* The Province of North Holland is still trying to define its role in the new decentralized environment. The Province finds itself in the difficult position of having to prioritize development among competing requests from localities. In effect, it needs to assume the leading role played by the national government in the past, instead of passively approving plans submitted by the municipalities (Interviewees 12 and 13). At least a few planners within the Province are enthusiastic about the TOD concept and are working to convince politicians and financial planners to support it. The 2010 strategic plan prepared by the Province has identified 60 station areas within its territory with TOD potential.
- *Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment.* The Ministry's involvement in, and commitment to, TOD is limited. The Ministry views TOD as one of several suitable tools to achieve the goals of accessibility, livability, and competitiveness stated in the new national strategic plan (Interviewee 17; Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid, 2012).
- *Dutch Railways*. Dutch Railways (NS), which operates an extensive rail service, is very interested in TOD, which is assumed will generate more passengers and therefore more revenues for the company. This might counter the effects of the economic downturn, which has led passengers to economize on train travel (Interviewee 30).[2] In Amsterdam, Dutch Railways is campaigning for new TOD, especially near central nodes such as Schiphol Airport and Amsterdam Central Station (Interviewee 32). Operating as a private company (but controlled by the state), Dutch Railways follows a market-based approach, investing in TOD only if profit projections look promising.
- *Exchange Platforms and Networks*. In the Netherlands there are myriad collaboration platforms and knowledge exchange networks on transport and spatial planning. Platforms with at least an implicit TOD interest include StedenbaanPlus, OV-Bureau Randstad, Vereniging Deltametropool, KpVV, and Platform 31. Their functions are listed in Table 1. Some of these platforms are research-oriented while others focus on advocacy. StedenbaanPlus, active in the heavily populated southern section of the Randstad (Amsterdam belongs in the northern section), is in the forefront of TOD promotion within the country.[3] Platform 31 and Vereniging Deltametropool are the most internationally oriented of the group. The others have primarily a national or regional focus. Generally, these platforms or networks do not have decision making authority. They conduct research, develop strategies, and make suggestions to partners. Funding is accrued in various ways (e.g. through government grants, membership fees, donations, and consultancy fees).

Objects of transfer: TOD as a moving target

Varying concepts of TOD emerged from the interviews (including "integration of transport and spatial planning", "coordinated land use and transport development", "development along rail and road transport corridors", "development focused around transit nodes", "station development", "land use mix", "development along transit corridors", "hierarchical network of corridors, hubs, and nodes", "regional network-based development strategy", and "public-transport based urbanization"). These concepts vary a great deal in terms of the scale (node vs. network, neighborhood vs. region) and the precision (guiding principle vs. practical tool) assigned to TOD. An interviewee commented:

> "TOD seems to be an 'expandable' notion that fits a variety of definitions (Interviewee 10)."

Interviewees also had differing views about the origins of the TOD concept. Some believed that the concept has been around since 1960s and 1970s, when car traffic and congestion first became a problem. Others said that the concept was first applied in Amsterdam in the late 1980s at a few stations along the ring-rail, which were meant to become secondary city centers. Others asserted that the TOD idea arrived in the late 1990s, when planners realized that, with greater job specialization, large employment catchment areas exist. TOD was seen as a way of tackling the transport demand implications of these expanding travel-to-work areas. In sum, some interviewees consider TOD to be a new concept for the Netherlands but others see it as old hat:

> "The Netherlands has been using TOD-like policies for years. But with the introduction of the term 'TOD' about five years ago, people began to think of it as an exciting new idea (Interviewee 28)."

Among the interviewees there are uncertainties surfaced about whether TOD has Dutch, European, or American origins:

> "If the term TOD is used, it evokes ideas of foreignness and complexity (Interviewee 31)."

> "The term TOD brings to mind the US and the suburbs (Interviewee 36)."

> "The TOD concept has been marketed as American, but it is really homegrown in Europe (Interviewee 37)."

Discrepancies in TOD definition, history, and origin are due to the varied character of TOD. They might also be due to the fact that the term is used only in English language documents and by experts and academics. In fact, several interviewees had first heard of the term while attending recent lectures by Dutch or American academics. In their daily work most Dutch practitioners use the local term "knooppunten", which means "node" but it also means "knot" or "problem". Because "knooppunten" can have a somewhat negative connotation, some interviewees believe that the "American" term is more attractive to use. Similarly, "corridor development" is often avoided since it is associated with "tunnel construction" (Interviewees 12 and 13).

Motivations for transfer: from ABC to TOD

Notwithstanding their differences in understandings about what constituted TOD, interviews consistently noted that the TOD concept has indeed been (re)discovered, on account of multiple factors, including (not necessarily in order of importance): the

[2] Reductions in the number of travelers may also be due to the introduction of telecommuting options by employers (see for example Hamer et al., 1991).

[3] Outside the Randstad, two places in the Netherlands are claimed by interviewees to have become TOD beacons: the Province of Gelderland (whose main cities are Arnhem-Nijmegen) in the east and the City of Eindhoven in the south.

current planning policy vacuum, various anxieties produced by the recession, the eagerness to project an image of progress and success (matching European competitors), the desire to meet the needs of the new generation that is re-embracing urban living, planners' own professional ambitions, national and supranational funding opportunities, and sustainability concerns.[4] The interviewees' comments revealed that these factors are driven by various fears about the past and the future. As mentioned earlier, the quest for sustainable development patterns and the shifting spatial dynamics of contemporary society, in addition to technological innovations in transit and logistics and privatization reforms in rail transit, help explain the resurgence of TOD in other European countries (Bertolini et al., 2012).

Policy vacuum and waning reputation

In the early 1990s, the national government adopted the 'ABC' location policy (Alpkokin, 2012; Schwanen et al., 2004). The underlying concept was simple and straightforward. Locations were labeled "A," "B," and "C," according to the level of accessibility by public transport and automobile. A locations such as city centers had good public transport access but poor car access, B locations such as first-ring suburbs had average access by both modes, and C locations such as exurban sites had poor public transport access but good car access. Tight limits on parking were instituted at A locations. Parking limits were more moderate at B locations, while C locations were allowed generous parking. There were no limits on development in C locations.

Lack of parking at A and B locations led to resistance by businesses, which felt that their needs were being ignored. They began to leave central cities for cheaper, car-oriented locations (Interviewee 20; Interviewee 36). Later in the decade it became clear that the ABC policy was ineffectual, unfeasible (especially outside large cities), and even counterproductive. Although the policy was never officially dismantled, in practice it fell into disuse or was superseded by other interests (Interviewee 37). However, the ABC policy greatly boosted the Dutch planning reputation and self-confidence. One interviewee said:

> "Dutch planners believed that they were the world leaders in planning. Examples from elsewhere were irrelevant then (Interviewee 34)."

Since the demise of the ABC policy, the international standing of Dutch planning has somewhat declined, which has led to a slight change in the attitude of professionals:

> "Now that Dutch planners have sort of lost their earlier reputation, they have become more outward looking (Interviewee 20)."

Abandoning the ABC policy contributed to a partial policy vacuum at the regional and local levels, and TOD is seen by some as the successor to fill the void (Interviewee 39).

Crisis-generated anxiety

The current economic recession has generated two types of anxieties: one about the future of cities and another about the future of planners. The planning profession is disconcerted, as one interviewee described:

> "Until recently, master plans with long-term horizons were imposed top-down. Planners reviewed statistics and decided what was needed. People had to fit in the government vision rather than vice versa. . . The old model worked OK in good economic times. Now, with the downturn, cities can't attract private developers. This has practically run the planning system to the ground. . . Planners are faced with big questions: How can the profession survive in a time of crisis? What's the added value of planners? What new models can be adopted? (Interviewee 34)"

TOD is seen as a tool to repair some of the current planning ills. However, confidence and expertise in how to create successful TOD seems to be lacking, as one interviewee remarked:

> "In the US, they are better at TOD. I like their pragmatic decision making, their positive attitude, and their solution-oriented mentality. In the end, they stick with the plan. Besides, they are excellent at presenting and marketing their ideas. That's problematic here in the Netherlands. Copenhagen too has been much more aggressive than Amsterdam in showcasing its achievements. . . (Interviewee 38)"

Somewhat demoralized, Dutch planners are desperately searching for solutions abroad, as the following interviewee noted:

> "We're even looking at Belgium now. Before we didn't even think Belgium had a planning system! In Antwerp - as opposed to Rotterdam – they were able to complete the new rail project on time and within budget. . . Realizing that planning for growth is over, we are also looking at Germany, which has experienced population decline for a longer period (Interviewee 34)."

TOD offers some hope for private developers too, as real estate prices around rail stations have remained stable even while dropping in other locations (Interviewees 22 and 31). While the economic crisis has hindered development, many infrastructure funds have already been earmarked a long time ago and several railway station renovation projects (so-called National Key Projects) are ongoing. These provide a new opportunity for TOD (see Tan, 2009). However, most interviewees agree that new TOD needs to be cost effective, small-scale, and attractive, and believe that past domestic TOD efforts in the Amsterdam metropolitan region have lacked these qualities. For example, two TOD nodes outside Amsterdam's historic center, at the Sloterdijk and Amstel stations, are mono-functional office spaces, which are experiencing high vacancy rates. They do not include housing, shopping, or entertainment establishments. Their esthetic quality, with high rise modernist buildings, is low. While relatively convenient for office workers in terms of access, these spaces are dead after working hours (Interviewee 18).

Another business district, Zuidas is now seen as a worthy TOD candidate (see Gualini and Majoor, 2007). Located in the southern periphery of Amsterdam, Zuidas is served by a busy train station. The district is large and is rapidly growing and densifying. It already houses the headquarters of several large multinationals and new construction is ongoing. The "creative industry" cluster is attracted to the area (Interviewee 18). The district also includes housing. Zuidas has been modeled after La Défense in Paris and Canary Wharf in London. However, given the current emphasis on mixed-use, fine-grained, and diverse environments, planners are looking for neighborhood-level planning examples in other countries as well. There is also high promise for TOD development along the heavily used Schiphol-Amsterdam-Almere corridor, which connects the main international airport to Amsterdam's eastern satellite municipalities, and along the North-South underground rail line, which is still under construction (Interviewees 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11).

[4] Two interviewees (Interviewee 14 and 31) also mentioned accessibility problems and the arrival of foreign developers in the property market, both of which have led to the development of new policy ideas.

Image of progress

In an era of urban competition, both the Dutch national and local governments trying to project an image of success and maintain a competitive edge over other places in Europe (Tan, 2009). At the moment, however, the general perception among the interviewees is that the Netherlands is lagging behind other European countries in terms of public transport use and that car use is on the rise (Interviewees 12 and 13; Tan, 2009). To try to fix this, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment has set an "innovation target." Municipalities that come up with the most innovative project, compared also against international examples, might receive funding by the Ministry. One planner at the Ministry saw TOD as offering potential to contribute to this innovation:

"TOD might be a winner! (Interviewee 19)"

City revival movement

Dutch cities, alongside other European counterparts, are currently undergoing a veritable urban revival movement, which is reversing the effects of the 1970s suburban flight. The new generation is embracing urban living. The former trading centers of the Dutch Golden Age are regaining their centrality and economic vitality, with Amsterdam and Utrecht at the forefront. They have become crucial nodes of the "knowledge industry" (Karsten, 2007; van Diepen and Musterd, 2009). These trends mirror those in other Western European countries (see Butler, 2003). Interviewees provided various insights about these social trends and the forces that led to them.

In earlier decades, cities were not considered ideal places to live. Train stations, in particular, were considered hotbeds of drug dealing, loitering, begging, and other undesirable activities. Concerned about safety and status, many middle class households left for the suburbs (Boterman et al., 2010). Now, the new well-educated, highly-skilled, highly-paid "creative" workforce prefers urban "trendy" and vibrant locations with high quality design and social and cultural activities. It cherishes urban individuality and difference rather than suburban uniformity. Moreover, for contemporary dual income families it is often more convenient to live near public transport nodes.

Re-found urbanity is a windfall for transit. As Amsterdam becomes more popular, space becomes scarcer and costlier. The Amsterdam local and regional governments are trying to harness these trends in favor of TOD. While other cities are still utilizing quantitative methods in TOD planning, Amsterdam has shifted to a more qualitative approach, focused on user behavior. A new polycentric orientation has emerged in plan making. Instead of concentrating new development near Central Station like in the past, the City plans to develop in several areas in the city, each of which being well-connected by public transport (Interviewee 8).

Widespread knowledge exchange

Planners in the Netherlands benefit from a well-established and well-funded planning tradition. In many organizations, time and budgets are made available for professional development in order to keep up to date about the profession both in the Netherlands and beyond. It is not unusual for Dutch planners to stay abreast of planning practices and developments from around the world. The City of Amsterdam and the Province of North Holland have in the past organized seminars or workshops on urban issues, where distinguished foreign speakers were invited. Many public service employees have access to professional magazines or newsletters, and participate in international conference series.

Occasionally, individual practitioners may even organize and pay for tourist/study visits to other countries, most often neighbors but sometimes overseas (Asia or North America). Study tours abroad, especially those related to a specific project, are also organized and funded by public sector institutions and professional bodies (although these opportunities have decreased with the economic crisis). One interviewee from the City of Amsterdam described the process:

> "Planning Department staff members take trips in turn so as to look at what's happening abroad. Then they compare travel notes, find a common ground. . . It's also in line with the Department's social-democratic leaning (Interviewee 2)."

Within Dutch academia, a substantial amount of research takes place relative to the size of the country. Research activities are encouraged and comparatively well-funded (though grants, or for students through exchange/visiting programs). For this reason, graduate students are often interested and able to conduct research abroad. For example, several interviewees had written their Master's or PhD theses on TOD in eastern Asian cities; one key consultant studied in Portland, Oregon. Moreover, Dutch planning programs attract a large number of foreign students, who often select study topics related to their home country. Now employed in planning practice, these individuals carry their accumulated knowledge and look for ways to make it relevant to the Dutch context. They also continue to serve as a liaison between their organization and foreign contexts.

Consultancy firms endeavor to stay up to date with available tools and the "state of the art" in their field, in order to "maintain an edge over the competition." Sometimes they set a budget aside for this purpose (Interviewee 8). Knowledge exchange platforms also acknowledged being very motivated in identifying and spreading news on best practice case studies:

> "[Our organization] is always looking for interesting places, interesting people, places with similar challenges that are approaching them in innovative ways (Interviewee 34)."

Funding opportunities

Much of the interest in new or revived ideas, such as TOD, is opportunistic and tends to be activated as funding from the national government and the European Union becomes available, or when business prospects appear in emerging markets. Several interviewees pointed to these factors:

> "If word gets around that the national government has picked up some concept, everyone starts talking about that concept, hoping to obtain funding (Interviewee 8)."

> "The EU provides funding for collaborative projects, while here we have to compete with other large cities or regions, such as the Randstad, for funding from the national government (Interviewee 27)."

> "Most often the Ministry organizes tours to countries that present future business opportunities, such as the BRICS, Eastern Europe, Turkey. It's 'economic diplomacy' (Interviewee 15)."

Sustainability and environmental protection

Sustainability concerns are another reason for explaining the interest in TOD (Interviewees 7 and 32). According to several interviewees, the Dutch government invested heavily in road construction in the post-war period. Instead of taking advantage of the extra capacity at existing suburban stations, much new housing

was located in car-oriented exurban sites. Transit followed later, once a certain density threshold was reached, but by then costs had escalated (Interviewee 34; Interviewee 18; Tan, 2009).

In the last two decades or so, with the realization that traffic jams are detrimental on many levels, public transport has been given greater political priority (Interviewee 34; Tan, 2009). An important turning point was the 1992 Amsterdam referendum, which created support for car restrictions and pro-bike policies. Now there is clear resident consent on environmental protection and livability issues (Interviewee 40).

Processes of transfer: import of the TOD concept

Learning from abroad: cherry-picking and streetlight effect

The places which interviewees cite as successful examples of TOD fit into four clusters: (1) northern and western European cities in UK, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and (to a lesser extent) France and Spain; (2) cities in the North American northwest, including Seattle, Vancouver, and especially Portland; (3) eastern Asian cities including Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Singapore; and (4) Perth, Australia. Clearly, all major examples come from other prosperous cities but the explanations behind this particular selection are contradictory.

Most interviewees suggest that similarity (of institutions, physical setup, and financial arrangements) and proximity (physical but also cultural and linguistic) are crucial features that make foreign examples relevant, as the following quotes from interviewees illustrate:

> "In Scandinavia English use is widespread, which makes communication easier. In France and Germany it's harder to communicate. Also, Scandinavia is culturally more similar to the Netherlands. Stockholm has a lot in common with Amsterdam. Besides, in France, Germany, and other continental countries the role of the state in the economy is strong. This is not the case here, so there is more interest in Scandinavian and British neoliberal planning (Interviewee 38)."

> "The Netherlands has always looked at the UK, which used to have a dominating planning system similar to ours. Now it is still an example because the problems are the same in the two countries: population decline and crisis. The Olympics effect in London has been an inspiration too (Interviewee 34)."

> "Copenhagen is the best city for Amsterdam to compare itself to – but it is also one of Amsterdam's main competitors! It won't give away all its plans to us... The TOD examples of Portland and Vancouver have become popular here because these cities compare in size with Amsterdam, they are on the waterfront, and have an intense biking culture (Interviewee 1)."

However, a number of other interviewees were in search of novelty rather than similarity and believed that there is more to learn from places which are quite different to Amsterdam:

> "[More recently] Amsterdam has been looking at Latin countries: Spain, France. Southern cities are livelier, more livable. Dutch cities are more suburban, duller. Traditionally, we've been attached to village living but recently the mentality has shifted towards an urban culture... I like Barcelona's mixed use and mixed traffic streets. They're there because Spain did not have money or space for modernist planning... That concept was applied in Amsterdam in the Eastern Docklands neighborhood (Interviewee 2)."

> "Far East cities – Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo – are excellent places to learn about TOD. Their public transport is privately run and operated. In Singapore, for example, whole new towns are built along the metro network... When a new station is added, the transport operator sells the air rights to private developers, who then build vertically on the station itself. You find all kinds of facilities at stations: shopping malls, hospitals, restaurants, government offices, community clubs, apartments... So, TOD is created by the private sector in conjunction with station development, at no cost to the public sector. But high density at stations is crucial to provide a large enough customer base for transport operators and businesses to make a profit - so the public sector restricts the supply of alternative low density locations (Interviewee 37)."

One interviewee, who had worked in South Asia, believed that less developed countries too can be of example to the Netherlands:

> "We have something to learn from Delhi's sense of urgency, its desire to 'do something,' its flexibility... Dutch planners can be overly focused on minutia, at the cost of losing sight of the salient issues... In India TOD is conceived as a framework of networks and nodes, which will be filled in with development by the private sector. Aesthetics are certainly not in the center stage. This course of action is very different from the Dutch 'total planning' approach (Interviewee 40)."

It is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate whether the aforementioned cities have actually created better examples of TOD than the Amsterdam metropolitan region. However, there is certainly evidence of "cherry-picking" (selecting examples that support one's views) and "street light effect" (selecting examples based on one's convenience) in TOD-related policy transfer.

Several interviewees indicated that they use TOD-related study tours and case study reports to "educate" politicians (Interviewee 12 and 13; Interviewee 1). At the same time, politicians have also been known to single out best practice examples that support their views (Interviewee 37). Often the same consultants are hired by different local governments, who then promote the same TOD examples everywhere (Interviewee 1). In a nation where knowledge of English is nearly universal, ideas from the UK and the US have assumed the center stage (Interviewee 20). A few US west-coast cities fascinate Dutch planners because they are exceptional in their context. For this reason, they have been object of extensive analysis, which is widely available. One interviewee observed:

> "Portland and the San Francisco Bay Area TOD are not what one expects from the US. From the US one expects stories about sprawl and car dependency (Interviewee 33)."

Learning from home: the Amsterdam supremacy

While Dutch planners tend to stay in the same job for relatively long periods, knowledge appears to move freely within the Netherlands (Interviewee 8). Although policy transfer and learning is not strictly part of their daily jobs, government planners generally maintain close ties with Dutch academia, private consultants, and each other through numerous workshops and roundtables, as mentioned above. Collaboration within the Amsterdam metropolitan region is moderately strong. Often affinity and exchange depend on informal relationships between individuals and on political affiliations (Interviewee 1).

Nonetheless, in the TOD arena Amsterdam is not generally considered as an example from which to learn for the rest of the country, nor does Amsterdam make much attempt to learn from other Dutch cities. Some interviewees dismissed this lack of interest as due to the fact that no outstanding contemporary examples

of TOD can be found within the country, in Amsterdam or elsewhere. Others pointed out that the Netherlands has a polycentric spatial structure, with national funding divided more or less equally among the provinces (Interviewee 22). Other interviewees considered Amsterdam to be an outlier in terms of image and therefore less suitable as a role model (Interviewee 18).

Apart from a lack of good models of TOD in the Netherlands, it appears that knowledge transfer between Amsterdam and other Dutch cities is hampered by mutual antagonisms, which extend to the professional level (Rotterdam and Den Haag are Amsterdam's main competitors for state funding) (Interviewee 29; Interviewee 18; Interviewee 28; Interviewee 38). Such rivalries between capital cities and the rest of the nation are common throughout the world.

Quantifying policy transfer

Amsterdam's interaction with other European cities is substantial, through visits and EU projects. If information is needed, Dutch local government officials tend to directly approach their counterparts in other parts of Europe. While case study reports on TOD prepared by consultants tend to be more comprehensive, they are also often perceived as inadequate. As one interviewee said:

> "I'd much rather hear from people who have actually built TOD than from 'experts' (Interviewee 28)."

Contact with cities in other continents is limited to a few communication channels (i.e. experts). For this reason, among others, most lessons are drawn from other European cities, especially those which are considered the most comparable to Amsterdam. A few interviewees succinctly summarized the results of study tours and interactions with foreign colleagues as follows:

> "It's hard to pinpoint the outcomes of study visits. My feeling is that they generally result in general inspiration rather than concrete action (Interviewee 1)."

> "Through that [EU-funded, international collaboration] project we got good ideas from the other partner countries, tried to implement them here, and sometimes it worked (Interviewee 29)."

In terms of TOD-specific lessons, interviewees indicated various aspects of learning from foreign examples. These are summarized below under the headings of institutions, density and scale, market philosophy, finance mechanisms, marketing, and urban design.

On institutions:

> "To make TOD happen, you need a strong regional government. In France, all major regions have 'communautes urbaines' (CUs), a voluntary regional government level. TOD is created as a public-private partnership scheme between CUs and rail operators. Cities next to transit nodes compete for development, same as here, but the presence of the CUs smoothes the process (Interviewee 38)."

On density and scale:

> "For me, an eye opener was a talk on Perth by an Australian professor. She showed that to have successful TOD there is no need for high rises. Until then, my image of TOD had been one with skyscrapers in it [informed by study of Asia]. I felt that the Perth model can work here (Interviewee 3)."

> "The 'corridor' concept, which has a convenient scale for use by the Province, has been borrowed from Japan (Interviewees 12 and 13)."

On market philosophy:

> "We learned from Germany to downsize plans and to give opportunities to the private sector, for example allow people to build their own homes. Amsterdam is trying to adopt some of these policies in [a few locations]. . . Belgium also taught us that flexibility and role delegation to private parties and the community is crucial. Something else we learned was selective investment: the City of Antwerp only intervenes to improve public spaces and block corners. The idea is that this will spur additional investment from private owners. Instead here the public sector used to take on the entire process: streets, parks, housing, everything. . . (Interviewee 34)"

On finance mechanisms:

> "In Zurich shop owners at stations pay for station investment. Now, Dutch Railways is trying to emulate this model at [selected] stations (Interviewee 28)."

> "Portland has found that it is cost-effective to subsidize developers– using tax mechanisms I mean - who want to build near transit (Interviewee 39)."

On marketing:

> "Marketing is the US forte. See this real estate ad? 'Are you Metropolitan?' It implies that developers are not just selling apartments but also a lifestyle (Interviewee 39)."

On urban design:

> "My visit to Vancouver resulted in a shift of perspective, from TOD to TOC [transit-oriented communities]. In TOCs, the focus is on fine-grained urban design details instead of large-scale spatial planning. TOCs are more about access than density. . . I liked this concept because it seemed more appropriate for the Netherlands (Interviewee 42)."

> "An international example that fascinates Dutch planners is Cologne in Germany. In Cologne the transit hub is easily accessible–when a passenger exits the station, she finds herself immediately in the center. Same in Copenhagen and Lisbon. In Dutch cities, usually one has to walk a bit from the station to the center (Interviewee 35)."

> "I like Singapore's 'doughnut' model for TOD. The area around the station has low rise buildings with a social character: shops, parks, meeting spaces. The high rise housing ring is at a five minute walk from the station. . . Some places, like Washington DC, have high rises immediately next to the stations. This is my image of US TOD. . . I think Dutch people prefer the Singapore model, with a buffer zone or screen around the station (Interviewee 41)."

Piecing together the interviewees' comments, the vision of an "ideal" Dutch TOD model, informed by international learning, begins to emerge. It involves a visually appealing, mid-rise, medium density, mixed-use, intricate, landscaped, and interconnected neighborhood, centered on a multi-modal station. The station itself is easily reachable on foot or by bike but screened from view from the residences. Rather than planned and built all at the same time with substantial involvement by the public sector, the TOD area is created in a piecemeal way by businesses and homeowners as demand arises. In addition to creating new TOD, existing development in proximity of transit nodes is filled in and redesigned in a less uniform fashion, to meet the contemporary taste requirements. However, much to the disappointment of many interviewees, this ideal TOD model is not becoming reality in the Netherlands. Various obstacles to implementation exist. These are considered below.

Obstacles to transfer: superiority complex and complex institutions

According to the interviewees, the reasons for the lack of success in achieving TOD to date are twofold. First, are institutional barriers that stand in the way of successful TOD implementation. These include the incongruous position of institutions due to the decentralization reform, intense rivalries among cities and regions and sharp disagreements over the hierarchy of nodes along transit networks, divisions between different planning professions (e.g. spatial planners and transport planners), the insulated nature of the TOD lobby, austerity measures due to the financial crisis, the lack of political interest in TOD, various challenges related to brownfield station-area redevelopment (e.g. expensive pollution clean-up and fragmented land ownership), cultural risk aversion, institutional inertia, and ineffective marketing of TOD-type locations.

Second, the nature of the transfer process has its own set of limitations and challenges. Some interviewees took the position that, while Dutch planners are interested in learning about new ways to achieve their goals, they still believe in the Dutch supremacy and therefore are not looking outside (Interviewee 34; Interviewee 37; Interviewee 18). As for Dutch politicians, one interviewee felt that their lifespan is too short to put in practice any new concepts learned from abroad. The same interviewee added that the rise of populism in the last decade has framed spatial planning as a left-wing hobby and led to close-mindedness towards new ideas from other places (Interviewee 38). Some study tours have been too short and superficial for lasting results.

Moreover, development is context specific and foreign examples need to be adapted to the Dutch context. Interviewees generally hold the belief that any examples from places, which are not comparable in size, scale, culture, and institutional arrangements, are liable to elicit skeptical reactions (e.g. "yes, but... the density is too high in Tokyo", "Japan-style development is too expensive", "Portland has a market-based system", "Hong Kong has a different institutional setup, just one single government", "Madrid and Barcelona are much larger than Amsterdam", "very interesting, but not possible in the Netherlands!"). To some, overseas examples seem alien simply due to the physical distance from the Netherlands. As two interviewees commented:

> "The Netherlands is not going to pick up Asian examples. Copying European examples is already hard enough (Interviewee 37)."

> "Seattle, Vancouver – these places are far away. Perhaps if I saw them myself, I would be more inspired (Interviewee 28)."

Institutional arrangements are another reason why learning and policy transfer is difficult. For example, while in places like Paris and Portland transport taxes are collected at the local level, the tax collection system in the Netherlands is centralized and the public sector is expected to invest substantial funds (purchasing land) before any development can take place (Interviewees 1, 37 and 42). As one interviewee remarked:

> "Policy makers always say: 'We want London's Canary Warf, we want New York's Battery Park' but they do not want these cities' institutional systems (Interviewee 32)."

The role and importance of different transport modes (and operators) is seen as another important factor in determining the relevance of TOD examples from elsewhere:

> "Singapore seemed perfect at first but then under the surface all kinds of problems became visible: the metro system is not extensive, buses don't have dedicated lanes, biking is null... (Interviewee 41)"

Finally, the way "best practice" literature has been presented is problematic. Case study results are rather mixed. As one interviewee lamented:

> "It has not been 'scientifically proved' [sic] that TOD can be successful (Interviewee 33)."

Conclusion: outcomes of policy transfer and the future of TOD

The Netherlands has an extensive rail network relative to many other countries, and travel by rail is higher than the European average (European Commission, 2013). The Amsterdam metropolitan region encompasses a dense multi-modal public transport system based on metro, tram, and bus. The majority of the population uses bikes daily for personal transport. In most of the country, rail stations are reachable within a short bike ride. The public sector has a long tradition of restraining car use, implementing traffic calming measures, and orienting new development to public transport.[5] This situation bodes well for the implementation of TOD in Amsterdam.

However, although a highly knowledgeable "TOD lobby" has formed, it has failed to reach out to a wider audience and frame the TOD concept for the planning community. The aspects of TOD planning for which planners from the Netherlands are most often looking for ideas abroad are related to three main issues. First, the design of areas in the immediate proximity of stations, especially in terms of esthetics, mixed uses, 24-h uses, and accessibility. Second, the financial tools that would make TOD viable without substantial investment from the public sector. Third, awareness-raising on TOD and its associated benefits. Amsterdam planners are generally motivated to learn from international TOD experiences (though not from other Dutch cities, which they often consider incomparable).

TOD-related policy transfer has been "soft" and fragmented. Overall, it has often amounted to little more than inspiration and has not been translated into action or tangible results. The interviewees have identified a range of obstacles to policy transfer, which can be summarized in terms of: (1) the ineffectiveness of the TOD lobby in advocating the concept; (2) the complexity and many-sided nature of TOD, (3) the bounded motivations for policy learning and transfer, (4) the selectivity in choosing role models, and (5) the embedded rigidness of the Dutch planning sector as well as the differences in institutional contexts. In short, it has to do with the difficulty of translating knowledge into policy and in bridging the gap between words and deeds, in any context. As one interviewee put it:

> "We all know what to do; we're just not doing it! (Interviewee 31)"

While this research focused on policy transfer in the Amsterdam region, it is reasonable to assume that some of these findings would apply across the Netherlands, a small country with a well-connected planning community. However, because Amsterdam is often considered unique, both inside and outside the Netherlands, it could be that policy transfer on TOD has taken place to a different extent in Amsterdam than elsewhere in the country.

Learning about TOD practice from elsewhere is not just a matter of studying urban design and infrastructure provision. It also requires detailed and critical analyses of policies which affect planning processes and governance. Complex concepts generally cannot be transferred in their entirety. Only parts will be relevant

[5] It should be noted that spatial planning was traditionally strongly connected to housing. Recently, this connection has become weaker and the ties between spatial planning and transport and infrastructure planning have intensified.

and transferable. Nevertheless, simple inspiration and openness to knowledge is still useful since it can help to lead planners and policy makers to view local practices in a different light or with a more critical eye.

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